CHAPTER TWO

MAZDOOR[1]

"The Indian Industrial worker is in receipt of wages which are insufficient to satisfy even the primary needs of civilised existence"

LOKANATHAN:
"Industrial Organisation in India"

LET us RETURN to the village whence we set out. There is great excitement. A visitor has come from the great city. How smart he is in his town clothes and how well-fed he looks! He tells the peasants how much better off they would be if they would go and work in the city. They would get good wages, so that they could pay off their debts and on their return purchase more land. Then, life in the city was so interesting; such fine buildings and entertainments. Like fascinated children, they listen to his tales and afterwards discuss them with animation. Such a life would be so much better than theirs. The stranger offers loans to pay the travelling expenses and makes himself responsible for finding them work on their arrival Some prepare eagerly to set out on this new adventure.

With what expectations do they reach the city after a long journey. The noise and bustle of the traffic frightens them; passers-by all seem so brusque and cold. The villager feels lonely in this strange new world.

The first night they sleep in°the street outside the station. After some difficulty they find their way to the factory and once more meet the stranger of the village. He seems less friendly now; curt and somewhat imperative. Soon they

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Worker.